Clark's Diary shows how his authority constituted and defended itself, how its jurisdiction at some times overlapped, at others competed with others -- often unsuccessfully. In particular it interacts with the press and the law. Like Workman, Clark was capable of saying different things to different audiences, but unlike him he often seems to have said the wrong thing in any case.

The inconsistencies by which Clark's authority constituted and perpetuated itself are naturally more apparent here than in his Reports. So too is the harsh reality of the Asylum, the starkest foil for authority's inconsistencies, and against which he had constantly to exert himself -- without ignoring it, as that would have the adverse effect of detracting from his own importance, but also without noticing myriad things about it that would only expose his limitations.

All around the peripheries of Clark's authority are the variously dissenting authorities of his patients: maintaining scraps of dignity and decorum in distress, chafing at confinements, complaining, eloping. Many of Clark's patients' texts recount their encounters and subsequently convoluted dealings with authority, as well as long histories of defiance or at least deviancy, as they "authorize" themselves to draw conclusions and point morals radically different from those of the authorities and possibly ourselves.

Clark's response to Thomas Merton's disturbing letter shows how the Medical Superintendent could distort or misrepresent a diagnosis in order to deny a patient's authority, but his texts in the Bedson case reveal how the "authorities" themselves could be trapped by the implications of their own diagnoses. Clark's frustration is directed at the "enigma" of the law, but the law has merely exploited the inconsistencies -- and indeed, injustice -- of his own pathologizing. Once demystified, law's "enigma" is merely his own double standard. It is perhaps characteristic of the kind of authority he represents and expresses that he can fault the mystifications and ruses of other authorities without so much as noticing -- or at least appearing to notice -- his own.

(The Obsolete Asylum)

As early as 1876 Clark reports attending "sittings of the Association of Medical Superintendents of Asylums held at Philadelphia on June 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th" (210). His visits on this occasion, to asylums at